

November 20, 2008

### **OBEY APPLAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EXPANSION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, the U.S. Senate agreed to legislation passed by the House (H.R. 6867) to extend unemployment insurance benefits for Americans suffering in these difficult economic times. President Bush has already expressed his intent to sign the legislation.

Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) released the following statement applauding the Senate's action:

"I'm glad that the Senate has finally agreed to an expansion of unemployment benefits. There are hundreds of thousands of people exhausting their unemployment benefits and they need our help. But it is not enough to just provide some temporary income to people who have lost their jobs. We also have to take actions to strengthen the ability of this economy to create new jobs and to preserve other jobs that may be wiped out without strong government action."

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#### **BACKGROUND:**

- Nationwide, the average weekly UI benefit amounts to about \$300.
- Nearly 900,000 workers are estimated to have run out of their current extended benefits by the end of October. Without this legislation, this number would grow to 1.2 million by the end of 2008.

- Economists calculate that every UI dollar yields approximately \$1.64 in economic impact as the money ripples through the economy and helps to sustain other jobs and restore consumer confidence.
- As passed by Congress, HR 6867 would:
  - Amend the current Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program to provide another 7 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every State (bringing the total amount of potential extended benefits to 20 weeks).
  - Provide an additional 13 weeks in high unemployment States defined as having a seasonally-adjusted, three-month average total unemployment rate of 6 percent (providing a total of up to 33 weeks of extended benefits).
  - Provide about \$5.7 billion in extended unemployment benefits (CBO estimate).